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ABSTRACT

Comprehensive guidance programs are effective in assisting children and young people, along with their parents, to respond to the challenges of life and school. When a strong, comprehensive guidance program is in place, good things happen, such as improvements in academic achievement, students taking more demanding courses, students developing and using career plans, and schools having more positive climates. A key to the successful development and implementation of effective guidance programs at the local level is strong state-level guidance leadership that provides regular ongoing training, resources, and technical support, as well as legislative and policy advocacy at the state level. Unfortunately, the number of experienced, professionally trained state level guidance supervisors across the country is very low, threatening the implementation of comprehensive guidance programs. A Guidance Leadership Academy should be established and funded to prepare state-level guidance leaders for the new millennium. (Contains 10 references.) (KC)

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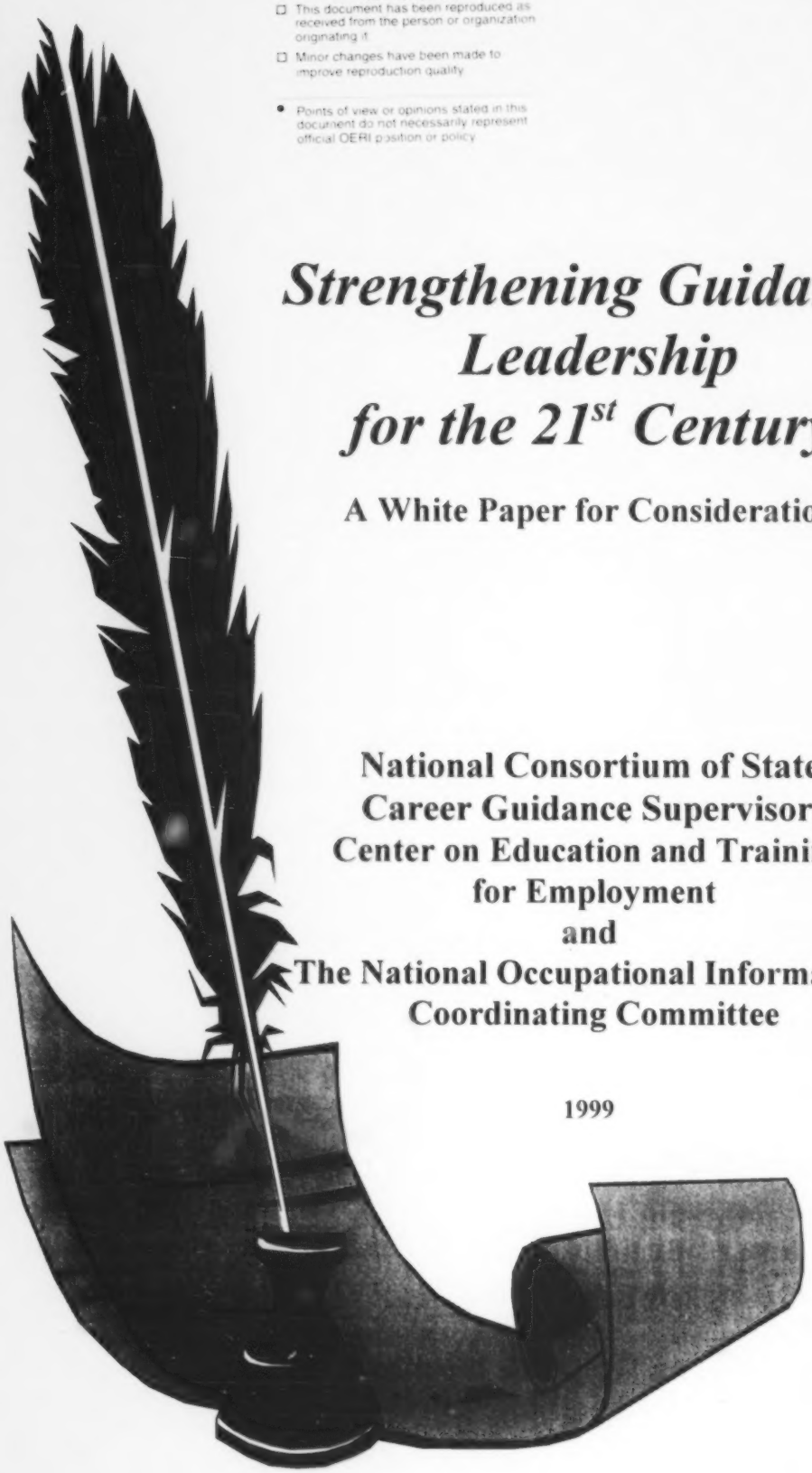

Strengthening Guidance Leadership for the 21st Century

A White Paper for Consideration

National Consortium of State Career Guidance Supervisors
Center on Education and Training for Employment
and
The National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee

1999

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Mission Statement

National Consortium of State Career Guidance Supervisors
Purpose and Mission Statement

The Consortium is a coalition of guidance representatives for participating state and territorial departments of education. The organization's mission is to enhance career guidance and counseling, leadership, and training; support research; and facilitate program improvement. The Consortium's purpose is to provide a framework for improving the effectiveness of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary programs, counselor education and supervision, and administration of comprehensive career guidance programs in school, community, and institutional settings. Specific objectives of the Consortium include the following:

- Provide opportunities that enable states to collaborate on and support projects of mutual priority, ongoing programs, career development, and pre-vocational services
- Promote the development and improvement of career guidance at all levels of education and training
- Involve business, industry, and government in creating, operating, and evaluating quality comprehensive career-guidance programs
- Serve as a clearinghouse through which states can seek assistance from public and private sources for the improvement and expansion of career guidance programs
- Offer technical assistance to states in developing their annual and long-term plans related to career guidance and counseling
- Provide assistance in the development, implementation, and evaluation of comprehensive guidance programs
- Provide evidence of program effects and a forum for promoting career guidance as a program of national significance with business, industry, and governmental entities
- Influence career guidance professional literature through research, publishing, and product development

Strengthening Guidance Leadership for the 21st Century

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Foreword

Most individuals would agree that guidance and counseling programs, when developmentally delivered, cause positive effects for students. Likewise, many would concur that good leadership causes good programs. Last, most would agree good programs cause high impact effects and, thus, are strongly supported by policy makers at all levels. The problem facing the profession currently is how does a state or school develop and employ such leadership prior to having the desired results?

This paper briefly traces the roots of guidance, provides a glimpse at what it takes to create effective programs, and gives examples of what leaders need to do.

This National Guidance Consortium of State Career Guidance Supervisors, operating for more than 15 years, is attempting to cause solutions to the guidance leadership issue. The Consortium provides this white paper as one small attempt to inform educational and legislative leaders.

The Consortium is indebted to those who edited this paper and gave authors a variety of perspectives. Special thanks is extended to Marsha Kucker, guidance leader from South Dakota; Zelda Rogers, guidance supervisor, Florida; Marion Starr, retired state guidance supervisor, Missouri; and Nancy Perry, Executive Director, American School Counselor Association (ASCA). A special thank you is extended to the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee for its support in the preparation and distribution of this white paper to two thousand national and state leaders.

Harry N. Drier
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Executive Summary

Strengthening State Guidance Leadership for the 21st Century

The Need

As we are about to enter the 21st century, the United States continues to undergo substantial changes industrially, occupationally, socially, and economically. These changes are creating substantial challenges for our children and young people. A rapidly changing work world and labor force; violence in homes, schools, and communities; divorce; teenage suicide; substance abuse; and sexual experimentation are just a few examples of these challenges. These challenges are real and they are having substantial impact on the personal/social, career, and academic development of our children and young people.

A Response

Comprehensive guidance programs are effective in assisting children and young people, along with their parents, respond to these and similar challenges. Over fifteen years of empirical research have documented that when school counselors have time, resources, and the structure of a comprehensive program to work in, good things happen. Here are just a few examples:

- Guidance interventions improve academic achievement
- Students take more demanding courses
- Students develop and use career plans
- Schools have more positive climates

A Key

A key to the successful development and implementation of effective guidance programs at the local level is strong state-level guidance leadership, leadership which provides regular ongoing training, resources, and technical support, as well as legislative and policy advocacy at the state level.

The Problem

The presence of experienced, professionally trained state level guidance supervisors across the country is perilously low. Too often, states allow long lapses between personnel changes or assign individuals with numerous other roles, guidance responsibilities. It is the considered opinion of the guidance leadership across the country that the future growth and refinement of the comprehensive guidance program movement is seriously threatened by the lack of highly-trained guidance professionals at the state level.

A Recommendation

Research has documented the central role guidance programs play in student achievement, school improvement, and school reform. Practical experience and common knowledge make it clear that a key to successful guidance programs at the local level is strong state-level leadership. And, since the presence of experienced, professionally- trained state-level supervisors across the country is perilously low, it is our recommendation that a Guidance Leadership Academy be established and funded to prepare state level guidance leaders for the new millennium.

Strengthening State Guidance Leadership for the 21st Century

As we enter the 21st century, the United States continues to undergo substantial changes in its occupational, social, and economic structures. Occupational and industrial specialization continues to increase dramatically. Increasing company size and complexity is the rule rather than the exception. This often creates job invisibility and makes the transition from school to work, and from work to further education to work, more complex and difficult.

Social structures and social and personal values also continue to change and become more diverse. Emerging social groups are challenging established groups, asking for equality. People are on the move too, from rural to urban areas and vice versa, and from one region of the country to another in search of economic, social, and psychological security. Our population is becoming increasingly diverse.

All of these changes are creating substantial challenges for our children and young people as they anticipate the future. A rapidly changing work world and labor force; violence in homes, schools, and communities; divorce; teenage suicide; substance abuse; and sexual experimentation are just a few examples of the challenges our youth face today. These challenges are not abstract aberrations. They are real and have and will continue to have substantial impact on the personal/social, career, and academic development of our children and young people in the 21st century (Gysbers and Henderson, 2000).

As these and other changes are taking place in our society, many organizations and groups of interested and involved citizens are providing programs and services at national, state, and local levels to assist children and young people deal effectively with these challenges. Within the education community, school counselors have been, and remain in the forefront of responding to these challenges through their work in developing and managing comprehensive

comprehensive guidance programs in school districts across the country. For their work on behalf of children and young people to be effective at the local level, however, many years of experience has shown that strong state leadership of guidance programs is a major requirement.

The Critical Roles of State Level Guidance Leadership

State-level guidance leaders play key roles in advocating for, and supporting the development of, comprehensive guidance programs at the local level.

These roles include:

- Providing training for counselors, teachers, and principals.
- Developing state guidance models.
- Training district-level guidance/student-service directors.
- Improving counselor training standards consistent with competencies required for developing and managing guidance programs
- Developing and monitoring accreditation standards for guidance programs.
- Securing state-appropriated funding for schools that meet guidance program standards.
- Providing technical assistance to schools and districts.
- Advocating for comprehensive guidance programs with state legislators, state board of education members, the media, and administrative and parent groups.
- Helping local school districts evaluate their guidance programs.

Unfortunately, the number of experienced, professionally-trained state-level guidance leaders that play these critical roles continues to decrease. Too often, states allow long lapses between personal changes in this position. Sometimes individuals with numerous other roles at

the state level have guidance simply added to their assignment. And, what is worse, many states have no one assigned to provide leadership to guidance at the state and local levels.

One of the most significant and urgent needs relative to developing and implementing effective comprehensive guidance programs in every school district in the nation is to establish a workforce of highly trained and experienced guidance leaders at the state level in every state. We call on the United States Department of Education, the nation's governors and chief state school officers, and state boards of education to recognize this need and to provide adequate staffing for guidance with the necessary funding within state departments of education. We further call on these groups and others, including business and industry and public and private foundations to respond to our urgent call for the establishment and funding of a Guidance Leadership Academy to address the critical need of strengthening state guidance leadership for the new millennium.

The future growth and refinement of the comprehensive guidance program movement in this country is seriously threatened by the lack of highly-trained guidance professionals at the state level. District-level leaders are often wholly preoccupied with legal issues of student deportment, and are so immersed in the management of crisis events that they can give only minimal attention to supporting the development of effective guidance programs in their districts. Too often, this leaves individual counselors or, at best, counseling teams at a school, with the full responsibility for the transformation of guidance in their schools. To their credit, a number of schools have succeeded, but progress is too slow and too difficult to sustain when local and state leadership are not present.

A guidance program defined and operated individually in every school building in a district can be no more effective than a math, science, or social studies program that also is

defined and operated only in each individual school building. For any program to be effective, all those charged with the responsibility for the program, including school boards, administrators, counselors, parents, and teachers, must share common expectations on such things as scope and sequence, expected student results, and accountability. For this reason, education programs are often rooted in legislation. It was no accident that the growth of guidance as a "program" coincided with the legislative language of the first Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (1984) which set aside funding for such purposes, including state leadership. Its subsequent reauthorization and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (1994) also support guidance as a program. State and local board policy and program standards also communicate expectations for guidance programs. Program standards establish both the nature, structure, and results of the program such as the achievement of core standards or levels of competency attained.

Two national events in the evolution of comprehensive guidance programs have been very helpful in furthering the guidance program initiative and should be noted. In 1989, the National Occupation Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) published National Career Development Guidelines which provided a consensus set of student competencies. The NOICC Guidelines are used at some level in a large number of school districts across the country. In 1997, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) published National Standards for School Counseling Programs which endorsed the concept of guidance as a program and provided another set of student competencies.

While these developments have been most helpful and supportive to the emergence of guidance programs across the country, they represent in large measure professional groups and agencies which, while very important, do not speak for the line authority in education.

Comprehensive guidance programs will be most effective when policy bodies, superintendents, and principals, as well as professional school counselors, speak with one mind and one language on this topic. State-level guidance leadership is key to bringing line authority to bear in support of guidance programs at the local level.

National legislation and guidelines from NOICC and ASCA have helped to lead the way, but strong guidance leadership must also be established and supported at the state level. Comprehensive guidance programs developed in an individual school building or district devoid of state level leadership and support are as vulnerable as a house without a solid foundation. Nationwide experience over the last twenty years strongly suggests that state and local education agencies must work together to establish a common vision and common expectations for their guidance programs through the enactment of legislation and the establishment of State Board policy consistent with state practice. School boards, superintendents, principals, counselors, and teachers must understand the organizational structure of comprehensive guidance programs and their contributions to student success. Such understanding is essential if comprehensive guidance programs are to be articulated developmentally across all grade levels. Maintaining the continuity of guidance programs, and guaranteeing their sustainability over time, are wholly dependent on all individuals in the system being fully familiar with and supportive of the programs.

In addition to national guidelines and state-level leadership, comprehensive guidance programs must be supported with a budget. While funding patterns vary widely across the nation, it is imperative that funding for guidance programs be addressed at a level that will assure adequate personnel, staff training, and the purchase of necessary equipment and materials. Inadequate funding for guidance poses the same threat to the viability of the program that it poses

to academic and vocational programs. Funding for comprehensive guidance programs is essential to not only establish, but also to maintain and enhance the program. State guidance leadership plays a significant role in addressing issues of guidance funding.

State guidance leaders also play a critical role in guidance program accountability. They work at state and local levels to help develop program standards for guidance. For example, Missouri uses a statewide accreditation process as a primary accountability vehicle. Utah provides comprehensive guidance funding to schools which meet program standards, utilizing a school self study and peer review process to validate compliance with the standards. In both states, state guidance leaders were active participants in the development of these standards, thereby advancing the sustainability and effectiveness of their guidance programs.

Further understanding of the critical need for state-level leadership for comprehensive guidance can be gained by reviewing the nature of other educational programs. Education programs are defined by structural elements that include the required preparation of teachers, the scope and sequence of the subject to be taught, the needed resource materials, and the space/lab requirements. Consistency and continuity of a program are achieved only when sufficient structure is built around the program to assure that the program maintains stability and is improved over time. It is important to recognize that most educational programs are fragile and subject to the shifting whims of time, place, and personnel. This is certainly true of guidance programs. Stability can be gained when these required elements are encapsulated in regional or state accreditation standards and expressed in state or district policy, and supported by strong state-level guidance leadership.

The Structure of Comprehensive Guidance Programs

What do effective guidance programs in the schools look like? Here is an example of a current and widely used student-centered guidance program that is specifically designed to facilitate students' personal, career, and academic development. This program model, developed with strong support from and in collaboration with parents, teachers, administrators, and community members (including personnel in the business and labor communities), contains three major elements: content, organizational framework, and resources (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Sink & MacDonald, 1998).

Content

The content of the model identifies student competencies considered important by a school district for students to master as a result of their participation in the district's comprehensive guidance program. Competencies are often organized around areas or domains, such as career, educational, and personal-social.

Organizational Framework

The organizational framework contains structural components and program components. The structural components define the guidance program, provide a rationale for it, and list basic assumptions that undergird the program. The program components identify the four parts of the delivery system that organize the program's guidance activities and interventions. The program components are guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support.

The guidance curriculum systematically imparts guidance content to all students. Individual planning focuses on the increasing need for all students to work closely with their parents to plan, monitor, and manage their development and to take informed action on their

personal, educational, and occupational goals. Responsive services respond to the immediate needs and concerns of students, whether these concerns and needs involve personal counseling, crisis counseling, referral, or consultation with parents, teachers, or other specialists. Finally, system support includes activities such as staff development, research, and curriculum development to make sure the full guidance program operates effectively. System support also includes activities that provide assistance to other programs in a school.

How school counselors use their professional time within the guidance program is important. The four program components provide the structure for making decisions about the appropriate allocations of school counselors' time. One criterion that is used is program balance. School counselors time must be allocated across all program components but especially the first three. At least eighty percent of a school counselor's time should be in direct services to students, parents, teachers, and administrators through the program components of guidance curriculum, individual planning, and responsive services. Twenty percent should be devoted to indirect services in system support.

Resources

Human resources for comprehensive guidance programs include school counselors, teachers, administrators, parents, students, community members, and business and labor personnel. All have key roles to play. While school counselors are the main providers of guidance and counseling services and are the coordinators of the program, the involvement, cooperation, and support of teachers and administrators is critical for program success. The involvement, cooperation, and support of parents, community members, and business and labor personnel are also critical.

Adequate financial resources are required if a comprehensive guidance program is to be successful. Financial resources include materials, equipment, and facilities. To make the guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support components function effectively, adequate guidance facilities, equipment, and budgets are required.

The mobilization of political resources in a school district is key to a successful guidance program. Full endorsement of the guidance program by the board of education of the school district as a "district program of studies" is critical. In addition, the adoption of a school district policy that highlights the integral and central nature of the school district's comprehensive guidance program also is critical.

Do Guidance Programs Produce Measurable Results?

Yes! Fifteen years of empirical research provide clear and substantial evidence that comprehensive guidance programs produce measurable results. When guidance is developed and delivered as a program, the student results are most encouraging.

Gerler (1985) analyzed a decade of research on the results of elementary school guidance and counseling program interventions in the affective, behavioral, and interpersonal domain of students' lives, and found that these programs affected students' academic achievement positively. Similar results were found by St. Claire (1989) in her review of the impact of guidance and counseling program interventions at the middle-school level. Evans and Burck (1992) conducted a meta-analysis of 67 studies concerning the impact of career education interventions (career guidance) on students' academic achievement. The results supported the value of these interventions as contributors to the academic achievement of students. Finally, in a major review of the literature in school guidance, Borders and Drury (1992) found that

guidance and counseling program interventions have a substantial impact on students' success in the classroom.

While some student results may appear early in the implementation of a guidance program, most occur only after the program has been fully operational for a period of time. This is best illustrated by the results of two studies, one from Missouri and one from Utah. Missouri has been involved in the statewide implementation of a comprehensive guidance program model since 1984 while Utah began the statewide implementation process in 1989. In the Missouri study, Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun (1997) found that students in schools with more fully implemented guidance programs were more likely to report that they had earned higher grades, that their education was preparing them better for the future, that their school made more career and college information available to them, and that their school had a more positive learning climate. In Utah, Nelson and Gardner (1998) found that students in schools with more fully implemented guidance programs rated the guidance and career planning services in the schools higher and rated their overall educational preparation as more adequate; fewer students described their program as "general." Students in schools with more fully implemented guidance programs also took more advanced mathematics and science courses and more vocational/technical courses. Students in the schools with more fully implemented programs had higher ACT scores in every area of the test.

Table 1 (Nelson & Gardner, 1998, p.11) presents results from the Utah ACT database. The results in the table are for students who were in the graduating class of 1997. The table profiles mean ACT scores for students in a high implementation sample. The authors of this "third party" evaluation concluded that the differences were "quite remarkable" in favoring the high implementation schools.

Table 1
Average ACT Scores of Students in High Implementing vs. Low Implementing High Schools

SCALE	Mean ACT Scale Scores—1997			
	High Implementation Schools N=1,668	Low Implementation Schools N=1,625	Total State N=22,295	Nation N=959,301
Mathematics	21.3[a]	20.9	20.8	20.6
Reading	22.3	21.7	22.0	21.3
English	21.5	20.8	21.1	20.3
Science Reasoning	21.8	21.4	21.6	21.1
Composite	21.9	21.3	21.6	21.0

[a]All differences are statistically significant ($p < .01$) in favor of high implementation schools.

In their review of outcome research in school counseling, Sexton, Whiston, Bleuer, & Walz (1997) concluded:

- Reviews of outcome research in school counseling are generally positive about the effects of school counseling. (p. 125)
- Research results indicate that individual planning interventions can have a positive impact on the development of students' career plans. Related to responsive services activities, there is some support for social skills training, family support programs, and peer counseling. Consultation activities have also been found to be an effective school counseling activity. (p. 125)

Finally, in examining the written accounts from a number of school districts across the country that have implemented comprehensive guidance programs, it is clear that such programs have had substantial impact on students and the overall climate in the districts (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997). The school districts reported that guidance programs helped

- Reduce the dropout rate.
- Decrease violence in the schools.
- Decrease suspensions and office referrals.
- Students graduate with written career plans.

Do guidance programs produce measurable results? The answer is yes! It is important to understand, however, that to see results from guidance programs, school counselors must be well trained and have the time and the resources to do their work. They must also have the necessary organizational framework—the comprehensive guidance program—in which to do their work.

Five Basic Premises for Guidance Programs

The previous section has presented compelling evidence that guidance programs have substantial impact on facilitating the personal/social, career, and academic development of students. When school counselors have the time, resources, and necessary organizational structure to provide systematic guidance interventions, and when comprehensive guidance programs are central in the delivery of overall education, the effects of guidance are clearly visible. Given these effects, it is clear that guidance programs and the work of school counselors play a central role in school improvement and educational reform.

To ensure that guidance programs and the work of school counselors play a central role in school improvement and educational reform, there are five basic premises that must undergird the development and management of comprehensive guidance programs in the schools. The five basic premises are as follows:

First, guidance is a program. As a program, it has characteristics similar to other programs in education including:

- Learner results (students master competencies in such areas as self-knowledge and interpersonal relations, decision making and planning, and knowledge and application of life roles, including worker and learner roles.
- Activities and processes to assist learners to achieve such results.
- Professionally certified personnel.
- Materials and resources.
- Organizational structure.

Second, guidance programs are developmental and comprehensive. They are developmental in that guidance activities are conducted on a regular and planned basis to assist individuals to achieve guidance competencies. While immediate and crisis needs of individuals must be met, a major focus of developmental programs is to provide individuals with experiences to help them grow and develop. In addition, guidance programs are comprehensive, in that a full range of activities and services are provided, including assessment information, counseling, consultation, referral, career and educational planning, and placement.

Third, guidance programs focus on individuals' competencies, not just their deficiencies. To some, a major focus of guidance in the schools is the problems individuals have and the obstacles that they face. This emphasis is important, but it is not dominant. If it is emphasized in isolation, attention often focuses on what is wrong with individuals, not what is right. Obviously, problems and obstacles need to be overcome, but they should not overshadow the existing or potential competencies of individuals. A major emphasis of guidance programs is on helping all individuals identify the competencies they already have, and assisting them to develop new competencies to be effective workers, learners, and citizens.

Fourth, guidance programs are built on a team approach. A comprehensive program of guidance is based on the assumption that all staff have some guidance responsibilities, as opposed to assuming it is up to school counselors to provide guidance. At the same time, it should be understood that professionally certified school counselors are central to the program. They provide direct services to individuals, as well as work in consultative and collaborative relationships with teachers, parents, administrators, and other professional personnel.

Fifth, guidance programs mandate articulation. A basic assumption underlying comprehensive, developmental guidance programs is that there must be an effective link among all levels of school guidance programs and between those located in area vocational schools and postsecondary institutions. There should be program continuity; those activities begun in the school are carried on, as appropriate, in area vocational schools and postsecondary institutions. This means that the guidance staffs of these institutions meet together on a regular basis to exchange information and update their programming as new student needs or local, state, national, or international challenges are identified.

The Bottom Line: Full Time State-Level Guidance Leadership

Effective comprehensive guidance programs at the local level require effective full time state-level leadership. Effective comprehensive guidance programs require budget support and accountability standards tied to program accreditation. Effective comprehensive guidance programs require a common vision of guidance and an understanding of the central role that guidance plays in student achievement, school improvement, and school reform.

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